

PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT OF SENATOR THOMAS J. DODD
ON THE CONGO SITUATION
DECEMBER 19, 1961

All of us hope that some steps toward the establishment of a just peace in the Congo will come from the conference between Prime Minister Adoula and President Tshombe.

My belief is that there will be no worthwhile solution of the Congo problem until there is a complete reversal by the United Nations of its misguided policy in its three principal aspects: (1) The United Nations must cast its naked aggression against the people of Katanga and their duly chosen government. (2) The United Nations must fulfill its original mission by combating the real sources of disorder and threat to peace in the Congo, which are the Communist and pro-Communist movements in the territory of the Central Government and the thousands of marauding soldiers of the Central Government who are completely out of control and are nothing more than vicious pillagers and criminals. (3) The United Nations must abandon its impractical goal of attempting to set up over this vast and primitive land, with its bitterly divided peoples, a strongly centralized government.

If the United Nations, because of its built-in deficiencies, is unable to act against the real threats to peace in the Congo, then the Western nations, in the interests of saving this vast area from Communism, must terminate the UN effort there and through a new form of collective action restore law and order in the Congo and break the back of the growing Communist power there.

There is much we can learn from this tragic Congo episode. The incredible failure of foresight on the part of the Free World leaders which permitted the sudden Belgian withdrawal from the Congo will stand to the lasting discredit of all those who could have averted it, including our own leaders.

The decision to attempt to resolve the resulting chaos through the United Nations has proved a tragic mistake because of the structural incapacity of the United Nations to act decisively against the basic threat to peace in the world, the Communist movement, or against any action that serves Communist ends.

But the tragedy was compounded by a series of UN mistakes which have ranged from the comic to the tragic and which have brought that tortured area of the world to the verge of complete disaster.

As is well known, the withdrawal of the Belgians from the Congo resulted in widespread disorder which threatened the complete breakdown of civilized life throughout that area. The Communists quickly moved into a situation that was made to order for them.

One area of the Congo, Katanga, under the leadership of Moise Tshombe avoided the general chaos. The Tshombe government saved the people of Katanga from the orgies, the racism, the economic breakdown, the growth of Communist power and the collapse of law and order which were prevalent throughout the rest of the Congo.

The desire of the people of Katanga to remain aloof from the chaos and degradation in the rest of the Congo is based on both moral and practical reasons.

The United Nations, on the contrary, pursued an arbitrary policy that it had no right to pursue; that the Congo must be unified under the discredited, incompetent and Communist-infiltrated central government. This policy, the people of Katanga resisted as they had every right to resist.

(more)

- 2 -

During my visit to Katanga I talked to countless Catholic and Protestant missionaries, Jewish leaders, officials and private citizens of all kinds. In every case I found complete and unswerving support of the Katangese stand in favor of a large degree of autonomy within a loose confederation.

President Tshombe is the duly elected leader of the people of Katanga. His conduct in office has won him the enthusiastic support of an overwhelming majority of the Katangese people. I witnessed this support with my own eyes and every person I talked to in Katanga testified to it. The myth that the nationalist movement in Katanga results from the influence of foreign mercenaries is a cruel lie and is only one of the deceitful and treacherous tactics of the UN forces in the Congo that has shaken the stature of the United Nations to its foundations.

The United Nations has, within certain limits, served to protect public order in some of the cities of the Northern Congo. It has helped to keep certain services functioning on a limited scale. Put on balance, its entire operation in the Congo has been marked by a grave misdirection of purpose and of energy.

The UN, under Dayal, the first UN representative in the Congo, gave tacit support to Lumumba as the constitutional parliamentary leader. It opposed Mobutu's coup of September 16, 1960, which overthrew Lumumba. And subsequently it attempted to undercut the government of Colonel Mobutu at every point. UN guards even escorted Lumumba through Leopoldville, protecting him while he harangued crowds with anti-Mobutu agitations.

The UN did nothing to prevent or to hinder the establishment of Gizenga's rival government in Stanleyville.

The UN did little or nothing to prevent the influx of Soviet bloc arms to Gizenga via the United Arab Republic.

The UN was primarily responsible for forcing the termination of the Mobutu government and the return to government by the Lumumbist-dominated National Assembly.

In Katanga, which has one-eighth the population of the Congo, and where there was no public disorder, the UN has concentrated two-thirds of its entire forces in the Congo. Meanwhile, in the rest of the Congo public disorder has been growing by the month.

The UN has taken no serious measures to disarm the mutinous units of the national Congolese army. These units, by far the majority of the army, take orders from no one, loot banks and shops, pillage private houses, terrorize the people, both white and black. Had the UN acted immediately on its arrival in the Congo, the Congolese army might have been brought under control. Today, by common consent of everyone, including the UN, the mutinous units are beyond restraining.

The UN apparently collaborated with and encouraged the invasion of Northern Katanga by Gizenga troops in the month of November. Captain Cruise O'Brien in fact, left Leopoldville, so that he could greet the invading Gizenga forces as they captured the city. Twenty-four hours later these same forces had embarked on an orgy of rape and pillaging and anti-white terrorism.

(more)

- 3 -

The UN forces did nothing to protect the 13 Italian airmen when they were taken out of the UN officers' mess at Kindu. Since that date the UN, despite much talk, has taken no measure to round up or to punish the guilty troops. Since these were Gizenga troops driving southward, there is a serious possibility that the UN forces in northern Katanga are collaborating with the murderers of the Italian airmen against points held by the Katanga army.

The UN forces in Katanga during the September fighting were guilty of a whole series of atrocities which have been confirmed and corroborated by American eye-witnesses of unassailable integrity. These American eye-witnesses told me that they had seen wounded Katangese thrown out of upper story windows, that they had found the bodies of twenty Katangese prisoners, all shot in the back and in a group, that they had seen women and children taken out of their houses, screaming, by UN soldiers, apparently as political hostages.

The UN action in the Congo has failed in all of its aspects because it has attempted to suppress not the Communist movement and the marauding bands of undisciplined soldiers but the free, peaceful, orderly, anti-Communist people of Katanga.

The United Nations was supposed to prevent outside forces from dominating the Congo and has itself become the outside force dominating the Congo against the wishes of its people.

It was supposed to establish and maintain internal law and order and it has failed completely to do so because it has employed its forces against the only area in the Congo where law and order was being maintained.

It was supposed to care for the homeless and destitute victims of the general chaos, and instead it has created a new group of homeless, destitute persons, the victims of UN aggression against Katanga.

Finally, it was hoped above all that the United Nations would preserve the Congo from a Communist takeover and it has instead merely accelerated the danger of a Communist takeover by fostering a central government which had strong Communist representation, by attempting to destroy the principal pro-Western bastion in the Congo and by permitting the unchecked growth of the Gizenga Communist forces.

The final consequence of this series of blunders we now see before us. The United Nations operation in the Congo is financially and morally bankrupt. It is kept in being only by the support of the United States and the Soviet Union. All of our major allies have withdrawn their support leaving the United States to stand alone. Finally, it required direct intervention of the United States to bring about the present meeting of Adoula and Mshomba.

I hope we have learned two major lessons from this tragedy. The first is that the UN must be reorganized so that its actions in resolving disputes are not limited only to those which serve the interests of the Soviet Union. Second, until the UN is reorganized, the U.S. must never again entrust its vital interests and abandon its crucial responsibility for action into the hands of an organization which is incapable of effective action against the world-wide Communist aggressive conspiracy.